

say, with Leeuwenhoek, that fish are immortal, or at least can never die with age; all must perish in time, that is, all which have a beginning, a birth, must arrive to an end, or death; but fish, living in an uniform element, and being sheltered from the vicissitudes and all the injuries of the air, must live a longer time in the same state than other animals, especially if these vicissitudes of the air be, as a great philosopher asserts, the principal causes of the destruction of living beings. But what must contribute to the long duration of their life is, that their bones are softer than those of other animals, and do not harden with age. The bones of fish lengthen, and grow thick without taking any more solidity; whereas the bones of other animals continually increase in hardness and density, until at length, being absolutely full, the motion of their fluid ceases, and death ensues. In their bones the repletion or obstruction, which is the cause of natural death, is formed by such slow and insensible degrees, that fish must require much time to arrive at what we call old age.

All quadrupeds covered with hair are viviparous; all those covered with scales oviparous. May we not then believe than in oviparous quadrupeds,